

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

**GRAND AVENUE SCHOOL**

Sauk Prairie School District  
225 Grand Avenue  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

(608)-643-7393

Craig G. Bender, Principal

John E. Pletzer, Assistant Principal

October 25, 1996

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**NOV 28 1996**

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D. C. 20554

Re: Docket No. 96 - 45

Dear Mr. Hundt:

I am writing in strong support of discounts for all schools and libraries so that students of every age can have access to the world of information technology. The telecommunications Act that passed earlier this year requires that a special rate for education be created to enable education entities to secure affordable technology services. This special rate needs to be significant and affordable to libraries and schools.

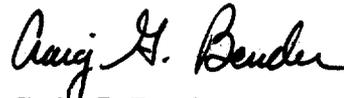
I am asking that you take steps to ensure that telecommunications companies provide services to schools and libraries at significantly discounted rates. Those discounts should offer a choice in determining which services best meet each community's needs. It is critical that the services go beyond the school house door and directly into the classroom, lab, and work station.

Our school currently has cable TV hook ups in each classroom. This service is provided by the local cable television franchise as part of the local contract with the municipality. This same type of service is desirable for connection to the internet and future technology developments. All schools and libraries should benefit from this type of service.

Connecting our country's students with technology will benefit everyone. They will be more successful students, better workers, and more informed citizens. Students need to use technology in their school as they prepare to compete in a world increasingly dependent on technology.

You have important decisions to make. I urge you to act on behalf of all the children that will benefit from your action.

Sincerely,



Craig G. Bender,  
Principal

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**Brooklyn  
Public  
Library**

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**NOV - 8 1996**

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

November 7, 1996

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M St. NW Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Discounted Rates for Libraries - CC Docket 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am writing to you in my capacity as a Trustee for the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) in New York City. The Trustees believe that it is the responsibility of the BPL to ensure that all residents have free and open access to information, regardless of age and economic conditions.

As the Brooklyn Public Library begins to launch the first phase of a borough-wide information technology program, we are intimately aware of the economic challenges of creating a telecommunications infrastructure that will enable us to realize this vision. Vital to our ability to accomplish this goal is the need for discounted telecommunication rates. Given the current costs for telecommunication connect charges, we estimate that the financial impact of our technology program will result in an additional expense of \$1 million to our annual operating budget.

As the Commission begins to deliberate future rates as part of its rulemaking proceedings, the Brooklyn Public Library strongly recommends that the following issues be considered:

1. Discounted rates must be significant to be effective. A minimum of a 90% reduction is not inappropriate, but whatever the rate is, it should be the lowest price offered to any customer, period.

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*[Handwritten signatures and names, including: "Frank...", "John...", "Al...", "William...", "John...", "Maurice...", "R..."]*

Brooklyn's Authors

November 7, 1996  
 Chairman Hundt  
 page two

- 2. Universal service provisions must include increased bandwidth, not just an additional telephone line. In the digital information age, libraries will need to have "upstream" and "downstream" capability to handle text, images, sound, as well as voice transmission.
- 3. Rates must be based on criteria which enables libraries like Brooklyn, to reach residents who are economically disadvantaged and do not have access to technology in their homes. We believe that this was the intent of the President and the Congress when the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* was passed last February.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Esther W. Lopato*

Dr. Esther W. Lopato, Trustee  
 Chair, Legislative Committee

EWL/MG:mml  
 cc: Bonnie Bellamy, President

To *Hon. Reed Hundt, Chairman*

Date *11/7/96*

At *FCC*

From *Esther Lopez*

Phone number

Phone number *718 780 7805*

Fax number

Number of pages including this sheet *3*

If there is any problem with this transmission, please phone the library at the above number for retransmission.

# Brooklyn Public Library

## Fax Transmittal

From Fax Line :

- Administrative Services  
718.783.1770
- Central Library  
718.230.0417
- Director's Office  
718.398.3947
- Media Relations and Publications  
718.399.0985
- Borough Park Regional  
718.436.7490
- Brooklyn Heights  
718.722.3366
- Brooklyn Heights Regional  
718.832.4688
- Business Library  
718.722.3337
- Coney Island Regional  
718.332.6732
- Eastern Parkway Regional  
718.778.0367
- Kings Highway Regional  
718.382.9021
- New Lots Regional  
718.272.6813
- New Utrecht Regional  
718.234.2680
- Service to the Aging  
718.336.4824
- Stone Avenue Regional  
718.444.7935
- Williamsburgh Regional  
718.599.4557
- Other

CC 96-45  
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Ruth Otte  
Executive Vice President  
Scholastic New Media

SCHOLASTIC INC.  
568 Broadway  
New York, NY  
10012-3999

(212) 343-7198  
Fax (212) 343-7834  
e-mail: rotte@scholastic.com

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

October 30, 1996

Mr. Reed Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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NOV 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Mr. Hundt,

On behalf of Scholastic, Inc. we are writing to urge you to recommend a meaningful "education rate" for telecommunications services, a rate that provides subsidized access to the Internet for schools.

Scholastic is a major multi-media company, and the world's leading publisher and distributor of children's books, classroom and professional magazines, and other educational products. We are also one of the leading companies in the US in educational technology. As such, we have extensive "real world" experience in what does and doesn't work in delivering educational material to students and teachers. We know how to do this in ways that are meaningful, useable and result in measurable improvements in education.

Scholastic has been a pioneer in providing content and professional development support to teachers through telecommunications. We have published school software since the early 1980's, and have published since 1981 Electronic Learning the premier magazine for school technology decision makers. Now we operate the country's largest and most popular online service for teachers and service. The Scholastic Network offers teachers over 400 interdisciplinary classroom projects, programs and activities in the major curriculum areas of language arts, math, science and social studies. Used by over 10,000 teachers, each classroom project connects them and their students everyday to interesting people from all over the world, scientists, authors, government leaders, field biologists at Yellowstone National Park, and much more. It also offers easily accessible, ever present professional development and support online.

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Scholastic believes that technology offers unparalleled potential for educational equity, but without careful attention to affordable access, that potential will be squandered, and a new divide will open between "haves" and "have nots." While many have felt, as we do, that such a divide would have an unfortunate effect on students without access, we have lacked hard data about the impact of Internet and online use on educational attainment.

In an effort to address this lack of data, this year Scholastic joined the Council of the Great City Schools and funded the first controlled study intended to isolate the impact of online use and measure its effect on student learning in the classroom. Its results confirmed the value of online access, and I hope you will carefully consider these new findings in your deliberations. The study, which was conducted by the non-profit Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) included 500 students in 28 elementary and middle-school classes in 7 urban areas. Half the classes had access to Scholastic Network and the Internet and half did not. All the classes completed a unit on civil rights and submitted final projects. The study found that students with access to Scholastic Network and the Internet achieved statistically significant higher scores in five of nine learning measures, and particularly in higher order, critical thinking skills. I am sending you an executive summary of the study via Federal Express to arrive tomorrow for your review.

What has this new research, coupled with our experience in delivering educational material to classrooms through online communications, taught us?

- 1) Computers must be integrated into the classroom and readily available throughout the day for use in a variety of subject areas. Having a once or twice a week session for an hour or two at the school "computer lab" will not result in a measurable and significant teaching and learning experience. Computers, online connections and the instructional material available through them must be located in the classroom in order to be fully integrated into the daily curriculum.
- 2) Teachers need support in integrating technology and the Internet into their daily teaching plans. Every day the Scholastic Network provides teachers with online activities and projects that have appropriate classroom resources, structure and teacher support built into them. In the study this took the form of online activities and projects around the issues of civil rights, as well as online mentors who guided teachers and

students to appropriate sites on the Internet and answered their questions about how to use the Internet. This type of ever-present support on how to teach effectively using the Internet is obviously crucial to teachers' success with online technology. Wide-open Internet access alone isn't enough. Teachers need ongoing support and guidance to be effective.

- 3) In order to provide the widest possible access for schools in many different types of school districts, it may be appropriate to provide deeper subsidies for schools in lower income districts and shallower subsidies for schools who have more resources. The CAST study, which was conducted in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades in inner city schools, demonstrates that the Internet and Scholastic Network can be very effectively utilized, even by younger students in lower-income schools.

In summary, through our extensive work in the area of educational technology, we have found that use of these new resources is not a luxury item. Instead, the Internet is a content-rich resource that provides a wealth of educational material, group learning possibilities and exposure to the world for a very modest cost. We thus urge you to recommend an "e-rate" which delivers online access to each classroom and includes full Internet service in its subsidy.

Sincerely,



**Ernest Fleishman**  
Senior Vice President  
Education & Corporate  
Relations

**Ruth Otte**  
Executive Vice President  
New Media

**Scholastic New Media**

568 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012

**Fax Cover Sheet**

<b>DATE:</b>	October 31, 1996	<b>TIME:</b>	2:13 PM
<b>TO:</b>	Mr. Reed Hundt FCC	<b>PHONE:</b>	
		<b>FAX:</b>	(202)418-2801
<b>FROM:</b>	Ruth Otte	<b>PHONE:</b>	(212)343-7148
		<b>FAX:</b>	(212)343-7834

**RE:**

**CC:**

**Number of pages including cover sheet: [ 4 ]**

**Message**



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
CHARLESTON 25305

October 30, 1996

GASTON CAPERTON  
GOVERNOR

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NOV 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

**The Honorable Reed E. Hundt**  
**Chairman**  
**Federal Communications Commission**  
**1919 M. Street, N.W.**  
**Washington, D.C. 20554**

**Re: Federal-State Joint board on Universal Service**  
**CC Docket No. 96-45**

**Dear Chair Hundt:**

**I am writing to express my support for the Administration's E-Rate proposal that is now under consideration by the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service which will provide affordable access to schools, libraries and rural health care providers. I believe this proposal, which provides free access to a basic package that includes Internet, will ensure access for low-income and rural areas. This proposal provides the necessary incentives for the telecommunications industry to reach out to our schools.**

**Technology is rapidly becoming a prerequisite in today's international economy. If our citizens are to achieve a high-standard of living, the educational system must provide them with the tools that they will need to compete. Telecommunications plays an increasing important role in improving our educational system so that we can provide all Americans with a world-class education. The Internet is a vital role of the 21st century and free and universally available access to the Internet will ensure that teachers and students will be able to benefit from the vast educational resources available on the Internet.**

**I know firsthand of the value of the Internet and technology in our classrooms. We now have more than 18,000 computer workstations in our kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. More importantly, West Virginia will have all of its more than 850 schools linked via high speed and direct access to the Internet by next year. We will be able to achieve this feat because of the firm belief of parents, business, educators, and lawmakers and communities that our students must be able to utilize**

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The Honorable Reed E. Hundt  
October 30, 1996  
Page 2

technology if they are to survive in the marketplace. In fact, a recent Jobs Through Education bill passed mandates that our middle and high school students learn to navigate the Internet, transforming their basic skills into marketable skills. Additionally, we have invested heavily in appropriate training -- more than 16,000 teachers to date -- and have worked closely with volunteers and businesses to wire all of West Virginia's classrooms. We are proof that people support, value and want the best technological advantages for their children, and ultimately themselves and their communities.

The principals that form the foundation of the E-rate plan compliment many of our efforts in educational improvement. I agree that in implementing the E-rate, there must be a dynamic and open process that uses advice and counsel from all groups that have a stake in the future of our educational system. In addition, all schools and libraries must have flexibility in procuring needed telecommunications and information services, while demonstrating an educationally sound plan. The proposal will help our schools and libraries connect to the information superhighway. Too many low-income and high-cost rural schools now can not even afford basic services. No school or library in our nation should be denied access because of an inability to pay, and this plan ensures that.

I urge you and all the members of the Federal-State Joint Board to support the effort to bring the power of telecommunications technology to all schools and libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gaston Caperton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gaston Caperton  
Governor

GC/ss

cc: Board members



TONY KNOWLES  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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October 30, 1996

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W. Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Federal State Joint Board on Universal Service  
CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

The issues that the Joint Board is confronting are of enormous importance to the people of Alaska. We have previously submitted comments in this proceeding, however, the enclosed list of points emphasize those areas of greatest importance to the State. We thought providing them to you now would be helpful as you finalize your deliberations.

Through passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress created the potential to assure that all Americans obtain access to affordable telecommunications services, including those that advance the development of the "information superhighway" to all, with special emphasis on education, telemedicine, and economic development. We urge you to take steps that will allow Alaskans to obtain these services at affordable rates to the same extent as enjoyed by other Americans. Access to high-quality telecommunications and information infrastructure is critical to the delivery of public health, safety, and education services in Alaska where vast distance, extreme terrain and inclement weather are the backdrop of daily life.

A copy of this letter is being filed with the Office of the Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission for inclusion in the public file.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Katz  
Director of State/Federal Relations  
and Special Counsel to the Governor

Enclosure  
cc: William F. Caton

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## **ALASKA POSITION ON PENDING UNIVERSAL SERVICE ISSUES**

The recommendations of the Joint Board and actions by the FCC should not lead to increases in rates for local exchange service. Increases in local exchange service rates would be contrary to Congressional intent. Thus, existing levels of universal service support for Alaska and other high cost areas must not be reduced.

Proxy models have not been shown to be an accurate predictor of local exchange service costs, particularly for service in Alaska and other rural and high cost areas.

Congressional direction that rural and high cost areas should have the same access to information and advanced services as urban areas dictates that universal service support be provided for the development of the infrastructure necessary to permit residents in rural and high cost areas to have access to the Internet and data transmission capabilities at reasonable speeds, and reasonable rates.

Universal service for telemedicine and education are important in rural and high cost areas, and particularly important in Alaska given the remoteness of many communities, the lack of roads, and the distance to the nearest health care and educational facilities and libraries. The principles of universal service adopted by Congress require that universal service support be provided as necessary to develop the telecommunications infrastructure needed to deliver telemedicine and Internet access to health care providers and educational facilities, respectively. The bandwidth available for these services in rural and high cost areas should be adequate to satisfy reasonable health care and educational requirements.

Universal service support should be stable and not create tensions between telecommunications "have's" and "have-not's." Thus, mechanisms such as explicit line items on consumer bills that would be polarizing and destabilizing should not be employed.

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CC96-45

**Community Unit School District 200**

Administration and School Service Center  
Office of the Superintendent  
130 West Park Avenue

Phone: (630) 682-2002

Wheaton, Illinois 60187-6400

Fax: (630) 682-2227

November 4, 1996

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NOV - 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Honorable Reed Hundt  
1919 M. Street  
Washington, D. C. 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

Community Unit School District 200 is a large unit school district serving 13,500 students K-12 in the western suburbs of Chicago. We have developed a Strategic Plan with a major goal of successfully integrating technology instructionally and administratively, as well as strategics for improved communication within the organization and with our community.

As a district, we have been anxiously watching the development and subsequent passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for its potential impact on our ability to provide our schools and libraries with affordable access to telecommunications services. We understand the importance of these services to the delivery of relevant instruction to our students as they move into the 21st Century and to our ability to better communicate with the community we serve.

Please consider the reality of the economic strain placed on public education as it attempts to successfully enhance educational delivery with the technological tools students will need to compete in the global community. What may seem to be "affordable" to providers may be out of reach for districts struggling to maintain current programs, much less add technological innovations. We would hope at a minimum, schools and libraries would be given a wholesale price for telecommunications services, and optimally that these discounts could extend to all dimensions of these services--i.e. fiber optics to wireless communications and the necessary installation services.

We appreciate your consideration of today's students as you make your deliberations. They are the citizens of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Dr. E. James Travis  
Superintendent

- cc: Andrew Barrett
- Susan Ness
- Julie Johnson
- Kenneth McClure
- Sharon Nelson
- Laska Schoenfelder
- Martha Hogerty

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CARL T.C. GUTIERREZ  
GOVERNOR OF GUAM

October 31, 1996

Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

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NOV - 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

**Subject: Ensuring Universal Service Access for Education**

I urge the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service to adopt a meaningful approach to ensure universal access for our nation's schools and libraries.

I know that the Board is examining ways to determine the service cost for connectivity. An initial step is to find a fair and equitable benchmark rate, which could be determined by taking a nationwide average of service charges for urban areas with competitive markets for access. The rate for schools and libraries would be a percentage reduction from that benchmark. To make access affordable the discount must be substantial.

This "national access charge" would level the playing field by giving the same discounted rates to all schools and libraries regardless of the distance to the nearest provider. Because no school or library should be denied access because of an inability to pay, the Board should also establish a mechanism to ensure that those institutions without adequate resources to afford even the discounted rates can get at least a minimum level of service.

A proposal offered by President Clinton, and backed by Secretary Riley, Secretary Glickman and Secretary Kantor, addresses these items. The proposal calls for free access to a basic package that includes the Internet and discounts for advanced communication services. Such a plan, referred to as the E-Rate, would ensure that teachers and students on Guam, as well as other remote areas of the nation, will benefit from the vast educational resources available on the information superhighway.

For Information Service Providers (ISP's), the difference between the discounted rate and the actual cost of providing service would be taken out of the Universal Service Fund. The Board must ensure the definition of eligible carriers in Section 214(e) is broad enough to include ISP's. This will ensure that affordable access to the information superhighway will be available to all users in the nation.

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**October 31, 1996**

**Page 2**

**Another issue facing the Board is whether to use Universal Service Funds to "hardwire" schools and libraries. Clearly, Congress and the President have made meaningful access to the information superhighway a national priority. Providing free or discounted services to schools and libraries that are not wired, or do not have the hardware to access those services, does not meet that goal.**

**However, with cost estimates for wiring the nation's schools and libraries and providing related hardware between 6 and upwards of 40 billion dollars, use of the Universal Service Fund alone may not be the answer. Instead, a percentage of the Fund could be set aside to ensure a minimum level of hardwiring and hardware for schools and libraries that do not have the resources to fund such an effort. Additionally, it may be appropriate to use the Telecommunication Development Fund, as provided in Section 714 of the Telecommunications Act, to provide low interest loans and loan guarantees, and pay for wiring and equipment. Also, the National Education Technology Funding Corporation, as outlined in Section 708, encourages the Corporation to provide maximum aid to elementary schools, secondary schools and public libraries.**

**President Clinton has already stated the Administrations funding commitment. This commitment, coupled with use of the Universal Service Fund, and through endeavors such as NetDay, will enable us to meet the challenge of getting our children on the information superhighway. Businesses, state and local governments, educational systems, individuals have all joined in getting schools and libraries on-line. But more needs to be done. The Board should continue to assess the progress of universal access in our schools and libraries, and modify its recommendations accordingly.**

**Whether located in remote mountains, the rural farmbelt, the north shore of Alaska or a Pacific island, all schools and libraries must have affordable and quality access to advanced communication services. As the November 8 deadline for making recommendations approaches, I thank you for your efforts to bring the power of telecommunications technology to our children.**

**Cordially,**



**Carl T. C. Gutierrez  
Governor**



Information Renaissance

P.O. Box 7188

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

October 17, 1996

Member, Federal-State Joint Board  
on Universal Service

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NOV - 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Board Member:

Enclosed is one copy of further comments relating to questions #9 and #15 of the FCC's Public Notice of July 3, 1996, in the matter of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, CC Docket No. 96-45. These comments have been submitted to the Federal Communications Commission on behalf of Information Renaissance, a nonprofit organization which seeks to further the development of computer networks in support of education, community development and economic revitalization. We appreciate your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact me for any clarification or elaboration that may be needed with respect to these comments or with respect to the activities of Information Renaissance.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Carlitz  
Executive Director  
Information Renaissance

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Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554

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NOV 8 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

In the Matter of )  
 )  
Federal-State Joint Board on )  
Universal Service )  
 )

CC Docket No. 96-45

**Re: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking  
and Order Establishing Joint Board**

**Further Comments from Information Renaissance  
on Questions #9 and #15**

*prepared by*

Robert D. Carlitz

(October 17, 1996)

This note addresses questions #9 and #15 in the FCC's request for further comments on CC Docket 96-45, In the Matter of Universal Service.

Question #9 asks:

*How can universal service support for schools, libraries, and health care providers be structured to promote competition?*

and question #15 asks:

*What is the least administratively burdensome requirement that could be used to ensure that requests for supported telecommunications services are bona fide requests within the intent of section 254(h)?*

Information Renaissance bases its responses on its experience with school and community networking projects in Pittsburgh and on the content of on-line discussions that occurred in the course of the recent Universal Service/Network Democracy on-line seminar. That seminar involved the participation of over 500 people, representing every state in the country and including teachers and librarians with over 2000 person-years of experience in the application of telecommunications technologies to education. An archive of materials relating to the seminar can be found on-line at

<http://info-ren.pitt.edu/universal-service>

We believe that the desire to foster competition in the provision of telecommunications services is one of the most important - but also likely one of the most elusive - features of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. True competition can speed the introduction of new technologies and services and provide dramatically lower prices for traditional and newly innovative telecommunications services. But we know of no examples which suggest that such competition will result without considerable public pressure to bring it about. It is far too easy for monopolistic service providers to relegate new technologies and services to that sector of the market willing to pay premium prices for such services and delay indefinitely the deployment of new cost-effective technologies for the mass market.

One simple mechanism to help speed the development of true competition in the delivery of telecommunications services is the development of an educated consumer market. Within the confines of Universal Service support for schools, libraries and health care providers, it should be possible to develop the necessary level of education in conjunction with the requirement that requests for supported telecommunications services should be bona fide, if this requirement is interpreted as demanding that bona fide requests originate from educated consumers.

To address this need Information Renaissance proposes to develop an on-line resource which will provide current information on the technology of school and community networking and current examples of best practice in the application of this technology. This resource will be constructed as an interactive and dynamical service, with an editorial staff who will respond to the changing needs of classrooms and libraries across the country.

We propose further that a small portion of the Universal Service fund be reserved for educational resources of this type, and that schools can qualify their requests for new telecommunications services by reference to such resources. On-line resources of this type could provide a self-certification mechanism by which users would consult relevant sections of the on-line resource, verify their understanding of this material through a simple interactive form and then submit their telecommunications requests to vendors in their region. The same on-line resource could be used by school districts and state departments of education in drawing up guidelines for district-level or state-wide technology planning.

From our experience in Pittsburgh we believe that simple educational measures readily yield cost-savings on the order of 10% to 20%. Indeed, we have examples of cost-savings which are considerably higher than this. Thus an investment of 1% of the Universal Service fund in educational measures of this type would be likely to yield savings which are perhaps ten times this investment. We feel that investments in educational services which can prepare school districts for their telecommunications purchases are likely to reap dividends in cost savings, in the development of sound educational programs and in the long-term sustainability of these programs and the associated technology. Furthermore, such investments meet the goal of developing an educated customer base for telecommunications services, which is likely to stimulate competition which will result in lower prices and superior services for the entire telecommunications market.

The Universal Service/Network Democracy on-line seminar discussed a number of options relating to bona fide requests. The preference of local practitioners in the seminar was clearly to minimize bureaucratic overhead in the acquisition of needed telecommunications services. For this reason, state-mandated plans, while offering a useful framework for districts to develop their local telecommunications policy, are not a popular mechanism for assuring that requests for new telecommunications services will be bona fide.

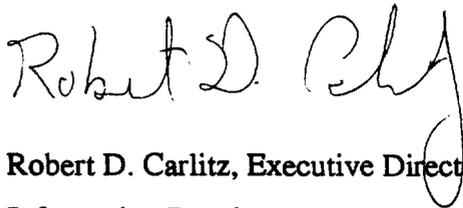
District-level planning is seen as an effective means of providing coherence to requests for service coming from individual schools. But there are two problems associated with this:

- (1) Few districts have the technical expertise to choose wisely among the available commercial offerings of new telecommunications services. This makes them susceptible to "steering" on the part of vendors dominant in the market and prone to select services which may be hard to support in the long term.

- (2) Examples of best practice in the educational applications of telecommunications technology are rare enough that many districts are unfamiliar with them. This makes it hard for such districts to achieve the primary goal that teachers have in the acquisition of telecommunications technology, which is to enhance the educational environment of their schools and classrooms.

The educational resource described above would address both these problems. We estimate the cost of developing such a resource to be on the order of one million dollars. Annual maintenance of such a resource would entail similar costs. Hence the 1% figure mentioned above would be sufficient to provide for the parallel development of several such resources, any one of which could be used by schools and libraries to qualify their requests for telecommunications services under the provisions of the Telecommunications Act.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert D. Carlitz, Executive Director

Information Renaissance  
P.O. Box 7188  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213